Increase in the Incidence of Child Labour

1033. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether incidence of child labour has been on the increase in our country recently, especially in the unorganised sectors;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this sudden increase;

(c) what steps are proposed to eliminate this child exploitation in any form in India or Indian children in other countries; and

(d) whether Government propose to change the laws to correct the situation and eliminate the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) As per the 1991 census, the total number of working children was of the order of 11.28 million as against a figure of 13.6 million as per 1981 census. Bulk of the children is engaged in agriculture and allied employment like cultivation, livestock, forestry and fisheries. There is no evidence to show that the incidence of child labour has increased recently.

(c) Under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 the employment of children is prohibited in 7 occupations and 18 processes contained in Part A and B of the Schedule to the Act. there are also legal provisions in various other labour laws safeguarding the interests of working children. Apart from legal measures Government have taken steps for withdrawal and rehabiliation of Child labour working in hazardous occupations. So far, 1.05 lakh children have been enrolled in the special school for their rehabilitation. The Supreme Court of India has also given a number of directions recently with a view to address the problem. Government have already taken steps for implementation of the directions of the Supreme Court. These measures have been taken to address the problem of working children in the country. Rules do not permit emigration for those below 18 years, going abroad for work.

(d) Some suggestions have been made for amendment to the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 to make it more effective. These suggestions would be taken into account while finalising the amendment proposal.

Review of the EPF Pension Scheme

1034. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to review the EPF Pension Scheme, after completion of one year of its implementation; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) As provided under paragraph 32 of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995, the Employees Provident Fund Organisation on 4.10.96 was asked to make annual valuation of the Pension Fund through the Actuary of the Organisation. The Employees Provident Fund Organisation have informed they have engaged the Actuary & given him all the required data for further action.

Purchase of Polar Bear-II from USA

1035. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government spent over Rs. 112.30 lakhs on the Polar Bear-II vehicle which was received in a damaged condition.

(b) whether the American Company from which the said vehicle was purchased, refused to carry out repairs on it stating that damage was not covered under the warranty.